

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 IO-13 HA-05 /066 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0314

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE XF PLO
SUBJ: NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

REF: (A) 77 STATE 306166, (B) 77 BEIRUT 5707

1. NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS.
2. BEGIN SUMMARY: UNRWA HEAD ROBERT PREVOT BELIEVES THERE ARE 400,000 PEOPLE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN IN LEBANON. THE GOL'S DIRECTOR OF PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, YUSIF SABRA, SAYS THERE ARE 600,000, AND MARWAN BUHEIRY OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES ESTIMATES 350,000 - 500,000. ALTHOUGH ALL FIGURES ARE AT BEST EDUCATED GUESSES, WE BELIEVE PREVOT IS UNBIASED AND THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE. END SUMMARY.
3. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON JANUARY 12, LOCAL UNRWA HEAD ROBERT PREVOT REPEATED THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON NOW IS ABOUT 400,000 AND NOT 600,000 AS ALLEGED BY GOL. PREVOT ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 365,000 TO 425,000 PEOPLE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN IN LEBANON, BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

A. 201,171 REFUGEES WHO ARE OFFICIALLY REGISTERED WITH UNRWA.
(THIS NUMBER INCLUDES ABOUT 25,000 LEBANESE CITIZENS WHO WERE BORN IN LEBANON, BUT WHO WERE LIVING OR WORKING IN PALESTINE AT TIME OF 1948 WAR WITH ISRAEL. PREVOT DOES NOT, HOWEVER, INCLUDE THESE
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25,000 IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN IN LEBANON CITED ABOVE.)

B. 100,000 PALESTINIANS WHO HAVE ACQUIRED LEBANESE CITIZENSHIP.
MOST OF THESE HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH LEBANON; EITHER THEY HAVE LEBANESE NAMES, OR RELATIVES FROM VILLAGES IN LEBANON. (MARWAN BUHEIRY OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS SAYS THAT THIS

CONNECTION IS OFTEN FICTITIOUS, AND THAT PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FREQUENTLY PAID BRIBES TO HAVE THEIR NAMES CHANGED TO LEBANESE ONES.)

C. 40,000-50,000 PALESTINIANS WHO ARE REGISTERED WITH THE GOL'S DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, BUT NOT WITH UNRWA. (YUSIF SABRA, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE GOL'S DIRECTORATE OF PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, SAYS THAT THERE ARE 70,000-75,000.)

D. 50,000-100,000 PALESTINIANS WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED WITH EITHER UNRWA OR THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL.

4. OF THE 201,171 REFUGEES OFFICIALLY REGISTERED WITH UNRWA AS OF JUNE 30, 1977, THERE WERE 94,980 LIVING IN OFFICIAL CAMPS, BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

A. BEIRUT AREA.

MAR ILYAS	430
BURJ AL BARAJNEIH	8,384
AD DUBAYYAH	2,566
SHATILA	4,738
TOTAL:	16,118

B. SIDON AREA.

AYN AL HULWAH 21,788
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NABATIYAH	3,538
AL MIYAH WA MIYAH	2,085
TOTAL:	27,411

C. TYRE AREA.

AL-BUS	4,643
RASHIDIYAH	13,165
BURJ AL-SHAMALI	9,368
TOTAL:	27,176

D. TRIPOLI AREA.

NAHR AL-BARID	13,197
BADAWI	7,203
TOTAL:	20,400

E. THE BIQA'.

WAYVAL	3,875
TOTAL:	3,875

GRAND TOTAL: 94,980

5. PREVOT POINTED OUT THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN CAMPS WAS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER, BECAUSE THERE ARE ALSO UNOFFICIAL CAMPS. SABRA IS NOT AN OFFICIAL CAMP, FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH SHATILA IS.

6. THE REMAINING 106,191 REGISTERED REFUGEES NOT IN OFFICIAL CAMPS WERE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

BEIRUT AREA 54,970
(INCLUDING DBAYYAH AREA)

SIDON AREA 19,620
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TYRE AREA 23,039

TRIPOLI AREA 4,863

BIQA' 4,159

TOTAL: 106,191

7. PREVOT EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT 90 PCT. OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON WOULD CHOOSE TO REMAIN HERE, IF GIVEN A FREE CHOICE BETWEEN STAYING IN LEBANON AND MOVING TO AN INDEPENDENT STATE ON THE WEST BANK.

8. THE GOL'S DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 600,000 PEOPLE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE ACQUIRED LEBANESE CITIZENSHIP. MARWAN BUHEIRY OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE 350,000 TO 500,000 PALESTINIANS HERE, INCLUDING THOSE WITH LEBANESE CITIZENSHIP.

9. COMMENT: ALL ESTIMATES OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN IN LEBANON ARE AT BEST EDUCATED GUESSES. NEVERTHELESS, WE THINK PREVOT'S FIGURE IS THE MOST RELIABLE. HE IS THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE LOCAL SOURCE, AND HE HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS OBJECTIVITY ON OTHER ISSUES IN THE PAST. HE BELIEVES THE GOL DELIBERATELY EXAGGERATES THE NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS HERE TO EMPHASIZE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM TO LEBANON. END COMMENT.

10. WE ARE POUCHING TO NEA/ARN COPY OF LATEST UNRWA MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTERED REFUGEES IN UNRWA'S AREA OF OPERATIONS. PARKER

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TAGS: SPOP, SREF, LE, XF, PLO
To: STATE
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